

## Keep Your Enemies Closer

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# Keep Your Enemies Closer

by [SilverWing15](#)

## Summary

(Keep your friends close, but keep your enemies closer)

////

He gets one earplug loose, its enough.

“Calm down, hold still,” Siren croons, and Tubbo has no choice but to obey.

His muscles go slack, his legs stop kicking.

Siren stares down at him, his eyes wide, shocked, horrified.

“You’re a fucking child.”

Part of the Dumpster Verse, read the others first

## Notes

Final part of the Dumpster Verse fam, at last. Six chapters of Tubbo Content and then I am done writing for this universe. I loved it, but honestly I'm glad to move on to other stuff too. I have a bunch of fun ideas coming down the pipe.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

# Chapter 1

They keep fucking rebuilding this place and Tubbo really wishes they'd stop. At some point it has to be acknowledged that the Titan Memorial Mall is a death trap.

But they keep rebuilding it, and so villains keep attacking it, and heroes keep having to stop them. Which is how Tubbo ended up here, choking on dust and weaving desperately through patches of light in the goddamn Death Mall.

The Blade's shadows are snarling, snapping at his heels. He whips around as he jumps off of a bit of rubble and shoots a small explosive from his wrist gauntlet. It passes through the shadows themselves, but the explosion blows a hole in the outside wall and sunlight streams in.

The shadows drop back with a hiss, snapping their teeth at him, but he's bought himself time. Tubbo backs away and wipes at his forehead. His hair is plastered against his skin under the mask, he wishes that he'd gone for something over his mouth like Sam instead of over his eyes. It would be nice to have both.

He has to have some part of his face uncovered, so the public has some part of him to identify him with. To make him a person, to make them like him. They have to like him, have to watch him. Or all of this is for nothing.

The shadows hiss at him some more, watching him with burning ruby eyes. "Just give me a sec, damn," Tubbo mutters at them. "Can't a man take a breather?"

The shadows snicker, pacing along the edge of the light. Tubbo's seen them cross brighter patches, he's not sure why they're so hesitant to go across this one.

The Blade is merciless if you really piss him off, Tubbo has been careful to just be a thorn in his side. Maybe it's paying off.

He takes a deep breath and coughs, "why do they keep fucking rebuilding this goddamn place? At some point is not worth it right?"

He could swear that the closest shadow shrugs.

Fucking weird is what they are.

Tubbo coughs again, there's sweat dripping in his eyes. Fucking hell he hates this mall. He checks his gauntlets, he's running low on explosives. Fuck.

They need to finish this.

He can hear Sam deeper in the building, fighting against the trio of villains. He's pretty sure that 404 and Dream have arrived by now too. They still need him though, he's one of their heavy hitters.

“Alright,” he says mostly to himself, “let’s do this.”

The shadows laugh and lunge for him again.

He dodges back, grabs the fluorescent baton off of his belt and smacks one of them in the side as it gets too close. It snarls menacingly and others appear, whispering hateful hisses, incomprehensible threats.

Shit.

He books it back to the main battle. “Ender! Could use a lift!” His com crackles, but Ranboo’s voice doesn’t answer. Either they’ve been jammed or Ranboo is down. Fuck, fuck, fuck.

He ducks and the Shadow misses the back of his neck. Claws slide over the armor at his shoulders, scrabbling fruitlessly for purchase. It flops onto the ground ahead of him and gets to its feet in a motion that no physical being could replicate. It grins, eyes burning bright.

Tubbo rolls to the side, gets back on his feet. Dodges through a clothing store. One of the mannequins is dressed in his merch. That’s nice.

He’s on the second floor of the mall. The railing along the walkway used to be glass but.

Well.

Its not anymore.

Its sturdy metal bars now. He vaults over them in one smooth movement. He throws a grapple line at the statue of Titan in the center of the mall. The least the fucker can do is be *helpful* if his memorial is going to cause so many goddamn problems.

The battle is raging below him, the Angel and 404 duking it out, the Blade is being pressed by both Dream and Sam. Tubbo can’t see Ranboo and Siren. Fuck where is Ranboo?

At least he’s got eyes on the Angel. Ranboo isn’t alone somewhere in the mall with him.

Siren presents his own dangers though.

“Ranboo?” Tubbo shouts into his com, eyes darting between his wrist and the arc of his swing. He skids to a stop on the polished linoleum of the ground floor, kicking up a cloud of dust and debris. He coughs again.

“Warden!” he shouts, “I can’t hail Ender.”

Sam hisses a curse as he catches the Blade’s sword on his gauntlet. “Find him.” The words are terse, angry.

Sam’s been angry a lot lately.

“Yessir.”

There are more shadows gathering on his tail, but Tubbo can avoid them. He hopes.

Sweat drips along his face, its so fucking *hot* in here, did they just not put in air conditioning when they rebuilt the place this time?

He would have heard if Ranboo was on the second floor, or the ground, so he's got to be on one of the upper two levels. Tubbo shoots another grapple line, all the way to the ceiling and gives the shadows a salute as he leaves them behind.

One of them leaps, snapping its teeth at his foot. He squeaks and pulls them up to his chest and its mouth closes on empty air. Tubbo's not sure if its on purpose or not.

The way it laughs on its way down makes him suspicious.

The third floor looks untouched as he reels himself up past it. Ranboo probably isn't there.

He arrives at the fourth floor. There's broken glass scattered over the ground, but it is still and silent. Dark.

He stops the grapple reeling and silently swings himself forward and back until he can catch the balcony railing with his free hand. He disengages the grapple, wincing at the sharp *clack* as the anchor reels back into his gauntlet.

He pulls himself over the railing, dropping onto the floor and crouching low. The glass crunches under his boots. The battle is still going on below, he can hear Shadows whispering, but there is no sign of Ranboo or Siren.

Tubbo creeps forward.

The shop with the broken window looks like a tornado has swept through it. Ranboo at least got his ear plugs in. That's good. He stands a chance against Siren that way at least.

As long as they didn't get knocked out.

Tubbo's heart lurches at the thought of Ranboo alone at Siren's mercy. They've been careful not to piss off the Angel's group, been careful to involve themselves in fights with them as little as possible, but Siren is unpredictable.

Tubbo creeps through the aisles, resisting the urge to call out for Ranboo. In the spirit of caution, he pulls his own ear plugs out of his belt and slips them on under his mask. He switches his com to vibrate and moves through the wrecked shop.

There are shelves knocked to the ground, more shattered glass and broken knick knacks. This was some kind of second hand shop or something. There's a couch around the corner. He can just see the edge of it.

He can also see the heavy duty combat boot beside it. He freezes. Those aren't Ranboo's boots.

Siren.

Tubbo slips closer.

Where is Ranboo?

There. Lying on the floor. His eyes open, his body straining at invisible bonds. Tubbo is at the wrong angle for Ranboo to spot him. Silently--he hopes--he creeps through the minefield of debris and goes around to the other side of the couch.

Ranboo spots him, his eyes go wide for a split second behind his mask, but he schools his face quickly, going back to glaring silently at Siren.

Tubbo watches the villain carefully. He looks just as hot and tired as Tubbo does. His hair plastered to his forehead, his jacket thrown over the edge of the couch. He's drinking deeply from a plastic water bottle, his head tipped back.

Tubbo should call Sam, let him know he's found Ranboo and wait for backup. He shouldn't try to take on Siren by himself.

But Siren has Ranboo. Completely and utterly at his mercy.

Tubbo springs from the shadows with a snarl and tackles him.

They roll, he can see Siren's shocked expression, feel water from the bottle soaking into his suit. Siren's mouth moves, but Tubbo can't hear him. He grins but it's more like a baring of teeth.

He kicks Siren away. He just needs to distract him enough to get Ranboo free of his influence. He just needs to--

The shadows sprout ruby red eyes and lunge for him. One latches onto his wrist, it's only the heaviness of his gauntlet that protects him from its teeth. It yanks his arm down, shakes it back and forth like it's more dog than it actually is.

Tubbo scrabbles at his belt for his baton but Siren is recovered. He's on his feet, charging towards Tubbo.

Shit, shit, shit.

He tries to doge but with the shadow controlling his arm he doesn't get out of the way. Siren crashes into him, takes him neatly and efficiently to the floor and pins him there.

Fuck.

Siren's mouth is moving again but Tubbo still can't hear him. The earplugs are still in place. He's still safe. For now.

Not for long though. Siren is pinning his wrists, careful to keep Tubbo's gauntlets away from himself.

Fuck.

Tubbo writhes but the shadow grabs him again. Another one appears and grabs his other wrist. Siren's hands are free, he's straddling Tubbo's chest, keeping his body pinned. Tubbo tries to kick up, tries to catch Siren in the back. Nothing.

*Fuck.*

Siren's hand swipes over his ear but the earplugs are under his mask.

*The earplugs are under his mask.*

Siren is feeling along the edges of it, looking for the catch. Tubbo tosses his head, snarls what's supposed to be "fuck off," but he can't even hear himself.

Siren threads his fingers through Tubbo's sweaty hair--he grimaces, but he doesn't let go--and pins his head to the ground.

*Shit.*

Siren checks the other side and he finds the catch.

*Shit, shit, shit.*

Tubbo tries to bite him, but it's too late. Siren flicks the latch and Tubbo's mask unseals from his face.

Siren grabs it and tosses it carelessly aside, his eyes focused on his true goal.

He gets one earplug loose, it's enough.

"Calm down, hold still," Siren croons, and Tubbo has no choice but to obey.

His muscles go slack, his legs stop kicking.

Siren stares down at him, his eyes wide, shocked, horrified.

*"You're a fucking child."*

## Chapter 2

### Chapter Summary

“What the fuck,” the Blade growls, deeper and more menacing than them all, “do you think you’re doing?”

“Sam,” Tubbo breathes.

He looks so small, before the rage of the Blade, before the ocean of shadows and wrath at his feet.

“Did you think,” the Blade snarls, “that I would let this happen? Did you think I would let this stand? Did you think that once I found out you could ever escape me?”

### Chapter Notes

WARNING: this chapter features Techno full on stabbing a dude in the gut. its not super graphically described but its not skimmed over either.

Also thank you to everyone for the lovely comments <3 You all have such faith in SBI being wholesome and adopting Tubbo and Ranboo and everything is hunky dory. You poor fools.

“Let me go!” Tubbo snarls, but Siren didn’t listen the last ten times he’s said it, he’s not starting now. Siren is holding him to his chest, his hands terrifyingly gentle. He’s bringing them out of the wrecked shop where he fought Ranboo and out to the balcony.

Tubbo can’t stop him, can’t fight. The only reason he can even speak is because Siren hasn’t ordered him to be quiet.

Fuck this is bad. This is so fucking bad and he doesn’t know what to do.

They take the escalator--frozen in its place, so really its more like stairs--down to the ground level. The fight has moved, no longer centered around the memorial, but now in what was once the food court. The Blade is pinning Sam to one of the tables, forcing him to lean backwards over it, their blades crossed.

“Warden!” Tubbo screams, “Warden! *Sam!*”

Sam gathers his strength and tries to throw the Blade off of him, but the Blade vastly outweighs him and he has the superior position. Sam is trapped, he can’t help. Tubbo can’t fight. All he can do is hang limp in Siren’s too-gentle grip.



“Techno,” Siren says, his voice tight, worried. And the Blade turns.

His eyes scan over Siren, looking for injuries.

They come to rest on Tubbo.

On Tubbo’s face.

His maskless face.

He freezes, his heart in his throat. He can’t fight, he can’t run. There is nothing he can do when the Blade stares at him, takes a step forward, another. He can’t even flinch when the Blade raises a hand and touches Tubbo’s cheek. Sam’s blood is on his hands, but Tubbo’s does not join it.

He can only stare up at the Blade. His face is blank, terrifyingly blank.

The Angel lands behind him, “Techno?” His voice is cautious, gentle.

His eyes land on Tubbo and a gasp slips past his lips.

“Holy shit,” he murmurs, “that’s a fucking kid.”

The words seem to snap the Blade out of his trance. His hand leaves Tubbo’s cheek, the blankness leaves his expression, and there is only *rage*.

Sam is stumbling to his feet, grabbing at his weapon, but the Blade is too fast. He snarls, his shadows are gathering around him, their ruby eyes flash, their fangs are bared, they are whispering in a furious register. Disdainful hisses, dangerous snarls, snapping teeth and rumbling growls.

“What the *fuck*, ” the Blade growls, deeper and more menacing than them all, “do you think you’re doing?”

“Sam,” Tubbo breathes.

He looks so small, before the rage of the Blade, before the ocean of shadows and wrath at his feet.

“Did you think,” the Blade snarls, “that I would let this happen? Did you think I would let this stand? Did you think that once I found out you could *ever* escape me?”

Tubbo’s heart freezes in his chest.

“I will *tear you apart* ,” the Blade growls.

And he lunges.

“ *Sam!*” Tubbo screams, he tries desperately to fight against Siren’s command. He has to move, has to fight has to stop this. The Blade is going to kill Sam and its all his fucking

fault.

His hands twitch. His head aches, but he doesn't stop. "Sam!"

Sam is stumbling back, he has no chance of standing against the Blade. Dream and 404 are nowhere to be seen. It's just Sam and the wrath of the shadows. They're lunging for him, held back only by the light of Sam's baton.

It won't last forever.

The Blade is advancing on him, unstoppable, a wildfire given form, unquenchable in his thirst for destruction and blood.

"SAM!" Tubbo screams, his throat is raw, his voice cracks and breaks like so much glass.

Sam's foot slips.

The Blade plunges his sword through his gut but Tubbo feels like it's gone through his heart instead. Everything stops, freezes, for one all-encompassing moment and Tubbo really, truly, fully realizes that Sam is going to die here.

Sam is going to die, and it's his fault.

Sam is going to die, and it's his fault, and there's nothing he can do to stop it.

The Blade *twists* his sword.

All he has is his voice. All he can do is beg, scream, threaten, plead. So he does.

"Stop! *Stop! Please, please don't, please!*" he sobs, he still can't fucking move, can't even reach out for Sam. Can't run to his side, can't throw his body over Sam's and shield it from the wrath of the Blade and his Shadows.

He can't fight, but his knees can give out. Siren almost fails to catch him, they both end up kneeling on the ground, staring at the Blade as he pulls his sword free of Sam's stomach.

Sam's blood drips off of the edge, falls to the floor of the mall. The Blade raises his sword high.

Siren turns Tubbo's face away, hides him in his shoulder. "Don't look," he says, but it isn't an order, it's a whisper, a plea.

"*Please!*" Tubbo screams, "Please just stop!"

He can't see, he doesn't know what's happening.

"Mate," the Angel says, audible in the hush that has enveloped the room as they all wait, breathless. Sam coughs, he's still alive. He's still alive.

"Phil." The Blade's voice is a growl.

“I know,” the Angel croons, “I know mate, but look.”

Siren loosens his grip on Tubbo, lets him turn and see. The Blade’s sword is hovering over Sam, the Angel has stopped the final blow with a gentle hand to the Blade’s wrist.

The Blade’s eyes land on Tubbo again. His breath hitches, he can feel the tears running down his face, the raw ache of his throat.

“We have other priorities,” the Angel says, “let him be, for now.”

The Blade looks to Sam, back to Tubbo.

Tubbo’s lips form one last desperate “*please*” but his voice refuses to speak it.

The Blade grits his teeth, turns back to Sam, lying helpless on the ground before him. One hand is shakily, uselessly, putting pressure on the wound. His breath rasps and catches as he waits for the Blade’s judgement.

“Fine. He lives. For now.”

The Blade swipes his sword through the air, spattering Sam’s blood on the ground and sheathes it.

Tubbo feels lightheaded, on the verge of fainting. Sam is still breathing. Sam is still alive.

A sob wracks his body, chased by a shudder. Siren pulls him closer to his chest, like some horrid mockery of a hug.

He wants one of Sam’s hugs. Warm and solid and safe. Rare, but all the more precious for it.

He wants Sam.

The Blade approaches him instead. He kneels before Tubbo, his face unreadable behind his mask, his hands covered in blood, his sword, the sword that had nearly killed Sam at his side.

His hand shakes, ever so slightly, when he lifts Tubbo’s chin. Forces him to look away from Sam and to him. “It’s alright,” he rumbles, “you’re safe now.”

But he isn’t. He really fucking isn’t.

“Sam,” he whispers, his voice a barely audible rasp.

“Siren,” the Blade commands, “knock him out. We’re leaving.”

“No, No!” Tubbo tries, he tries so fucking hard to fight, but Siren’s command is still wrapped around him. Unbreakable, untouchable chains.

“Shhh,” Siren croons, “it’s alright, just sleep.”

He threads his fingers through Tubbo’s hair, pulls his head back to lean on his shoulder.

“Sleep.”

“Tubbo--” Sam rasps.

And everything goes black.

# Chapter 3

## Chapter Summary

There are footsteps approaching the cell.

His breath hitches.

His hands shake, still pressed to his mouth. He squeezes his eyes shut and he can feel tears leaking down his cheeks. He should be better than this, braver than this. He can't be a helpless little kid. He has to be a hero. He is a hero.

But he's helpless, too.

The door opens.

"Uh, he's up," Tommy mutters quietly.

Tubbo squeezes his eyes shut even more tightly, screwing up his face. Its humiliating, being before one of the most dangerous villains in the city. Crying like some dumb little kid.

"Go on mate, I'll join you in a bit."

Its the Angel. The Angel of Death is watching him cry and sniffle and get snot and tears all over his face.

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

"Hey, explosion boy," the voice is young, familiar. "Wake up, idiot."

He knows that voice. That's the kid. The one from Schlatt's operation. Tubbo opens his eyes. The lights are dim, but the cell is much nicer than the last one they were in. There's no rust, no shitty cot.

There's sleek, featureless walls, there's a surprisingly comfortable bed. There's a door that looks like its held shut but a *hell* of a lot more than a fucking padlock.

That's when Tubbo remembers that Sapnap told them that the kid--Tommy--had been recaptured by the Angel of Death.

That's when Tubbo remembers wrestling with Siren on the floor of a secondhand shop.

That's when Tubbo remembers the wrath of the Blade, unleashed on Sam.

His hand flies to his face. His mask is gone, they know what he looks like, they know he's a kid. They're *pissed* that he's a kid--it doesn't make sense but that is the simple facts of the situation. Sam is injured, maybe even--Sam is injured. It'll be awhile before he can even come *looking* for Tubbo.

He is captured, and he is in a cell, and he is alone, and Sam might be---

A strangled whimper.

For a split second, his instincts have him looking for a victim, for someone who needs help.

Then he realizes that it was *his* voice. He is the one who needs help.

“So....” Tommy says, “are you like....hurt anywhere?”

Tubbo curls in on himself and shakes his head. *He* isn’t hurt. They’d been careful not to hurt him.

Siren’s hands had been so horrifyingly gentle when they cradled him while the Blade stabbed Sam.

Another whine, wavering and breaking at the end, nearly turning into sobs. He presses his hands tightly over his mouth. He wants to break, wants to shatter. But he can’t. He is a hero. He is alone. There is no Ranboo here to pick up the pieces, no Sam.

*Maybe there will never be Sam again.*

A tiny, cold part of him wonders if that might not be a bad thing. *You know what he’s working on*, it whispers, *you know what will happen if they find out about you*. But Sam is his mentor, Tubbo loves him, and he is hurt, maybe even worse than hurt.

He is a hero, and he is a hostage, and he doesn’t even have the mask to hide behind but he has to be strong anyway. Has to be strong.

And he has to be helpless.

So carefully, *carefully* helpless.

No one can know that he is not.

Tubbo has known since his powers manifested that one day this would happen. One day he would wake up in one cell or another.

And Sam isn’t here to get him out.

“Right,” Tommy says awkwardly. “Uh, well, good. Cool.”

From under the fringe of his hair--it isn’t held back by the mask, he isn’t *wearing the mask*--Tubbo can see him looking around. As if there was something that might distract them in the blank cell.

“Well they wanted me to be here when you woke up,” he says, “‘cause I’m y’know, less intimidating than them. Not that I’m not intimidating,” he corrects himself hastily, “I’m a big man and all but we know each other and shit. Kind of.”

The last time they’d been cell mates it had only been for a few hours and Tommy had been unconscious for most of it. Tubbo expects that they’ll be stuck here for a lot longer than that.

Its been months since Tommy was reclaimed by the Angel and nobody found him.

Another strangled whine leaves Tubbo's throat, no matter how much he tries to keep it in. He should be better than this, more in control. He should be doing the breathing exercises Sam taught him, should be calming his mind, preparing himself.

Sam gave him all the tools he needs to take care of himself.

Sam might be--

"I'm just--" Tommy says, hesitantly pointing at the door, "gonna tell them you're up?"

He hesitates for a second more, maybe waiting for Tubbo to protest. Tubbo can't gather enough of himself to do anything beyond shake his head a bit. But Tommy has already turned away.

He knocks on the door, it seems unnaturally loud in the confines of the cell.

Tubbo shudders and sits up, scoots until his back is in the corner. Protecting his back and his flanks.

There are footsteps approaching the cell.

His breath hitches.

His hands shake, still pressed to his mouth. He squeezes his eyes shut and he can feel tears leaking down his cheeks. He should be better than this, braver than this. He can't be a helpless little kid. He has to be a hero. He is a hero.

But he's helpless, too.

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"Uh, he's up," Tommy mutters quietly.

Tubbo squeezes his eyes shut even more tightly, screwing up his face. Its humiliating, being before one of the most dangerous villains in the city. Crying like some dumb little kid.

"Go on mate, I'll join you in a bit."

Its the Angel. The Angel of Death is watching him cry and sniffle and get snot and tears all over his face.

"Okay," Tommy says, quieter and more subdued than Tubbo's heard him. Even when he was drained he had more fight than this. Tubbo shudders.

Tommy leaves the cell, and then its just Tubbo and the Angel.

"Hi mate," the Angel says softly, cautiously.

Tubbo curls tighter, wrapping his arms around his knees. The bed shifts, not enough for someone sitting down on it, but the Angel is touching it somehow. The Angel is close enough to touch him.

Tubbo can't bear to look, but he can't bear to be blind either. He opens his eyes.

The Angel is kneeling at the edge of the bed, his wings draped around him, his arms folded on the mattress so he can rest his chin on them. His hands are palm down on the sheets.

He isn't harmless, but he almost looks it. He's watching Tubbo carefully. Tubbo can see the moment he realizes Tubbo is watching him back. His eyes brighten for a moment, but just as quickly they go soft, almost gentle.

For dangerous men, they are good at pretending to be gentle.

"Hi there," the Angel says again, "Tommy said you weren't hurt, right?"

Tubbo shudders again, pressing himself deeper into the corner, somehow.

"That's good," the Angel says like Tubbo had actually answered, "we don't want to hurt you, we don't want you to be hurt. I know you're scared, I'm sorry. I know you think we're going to hurt you, but I promise we're not. We want to help you."

Tubbo takes a shaky breath, opens his mouth. Only a croak comes out. He shuts his mouth again, swallows, tries again. The Angel is waiting, looking patient as anything. He hums a question, a tiny encouragement.

"Let me go," the words are difficult to understand, even for him. His throat is sore and his voice is quiet and rasping and half of the words disappear into a hiccup.

The Angel seems to understand him anyway. "I'm sorry, but we can't do that," he says. "You're here for your own safety mate."

Tubbo wants to beg, wants to scream, instead he shakes his head frantically.

"You're just a kid," the Angel says soft and sorrowful, "you deserve the chance to be one, we'll do everything we can to give you that chance, okay?"

Tubbo shakes his head more, "please."

The Angel's arm twitches like he wants to reach out and Tubbo wheezes and frantically tries to shove himself deeper into the corner.

"Easy," the Angel croons, "easy, easy, easy mate. I'm not gonna hurt you. I'm not gonna touch you. Its okay. Just breathe, breathe for me mate, please."

Tubbo can't. He can't breathe. He can't run, he can't fight.

He could fight.



He could kill them all.

But he *can't*.

“That isn’t going to work.”

Tubbo makes a strangled, wheezing, terrified sound, too quiet to be a scream, too intense to be a whimper. The Blade. The Blade. The *Blade*. He’s here, he’s in the room, he’s looking at Tubbo. He can feel the weight of his gaze, the prickling at the back of his neck that screams *danger danger danger*.

“Techno,” the Angel says, scolding, disapproving. Angry.

*Danger, danger, run, fight, freeze, do something, anything.*

But there’s nothing he can do. Nothing but sit here and listen to the villains pass their judgement on him.

“Being soft and sweet isn’t going to do anything, we’re the enemy,” the Blade rumbles.

“He’s a kid,” the Angel protests.

“No, he’s not. Are you?”

Tubbo opens his eyes. The Blade is standing over him, looking down at him. He isn’t wearing the mask.

For a monster, he looks a lot like a man.

Tubbo stares at him, shocked out of his panic. He waits. For what he doesn’t know.

There is no anger on the Blade’s face now, it is blank, dispassionate. But there is something lurking behind his eyes. Some terrible swell of emotion.

Crimson eyes peer from his shadow, watching silently, not even whispering.

“What’s your name?” the Blade says. It isn’t a question, its an order.

“Tubbo,” he obeys automatically.

The Blade grunts, approving.

“How old are you?”

Tubbo huddles against the wall, looks down at his hands, and stays silent. He shouldn’t even have told them that much. They can’t know anything about him. They already know too much.

“Tubbo.”

His eyes snap to the Blade without his permission.

The Blade crosses his arms and looms, but he doesn't come any closer. "How old are you?"

Tubbo grits his teeth.

"You sure this is the hill you want to die on?" The Blade asks, Tubbo flinches. Its only a saying. Its only a metaphor. "I can have Siren come in here, we're trying the nice way first."

Tubbo shudders, but he still doesn't answer.

"Alright," the Blade says, and he turns away.

Ice floods Tubbo's veins. "Seventeen."

The Blade stops. "Good."

"Techno!" the Angel snaps, "he's already scared."

"Yes," the Blade says, "he is."

"He's just a *kid*, Techno."

"He's a soldier."

"I'm a hero," Tubbo says, quiet, stubborn. He regrets it immediately. The Angel and the Blade turn to him.

"No you aren't," the Blade says.

Tubbo sets his jaw, "yes I am."

"Did you want to be?"

"Yes." (A lie, familiar on his tongue.)

The Blade knows it, he makes a sound, deep in his throat. Not a growl, but not a happy sound either. Tubbo shrinks away.

"Its alright," the Angel says, "he's not mad at you, he won't hurt you."

As terrifying as the Blade is, Tubbo prefers his blunt intimidation. The Angel's gentleness makes him feel fragile, makes him feel afraid. Its easier to push back the fear with the Blade. Easier to slip into the mindset of a hero, not a helpless kid.

But he isn't helpless.

He has to make himself helpless, even though he wants to fight, wants to tell them the truth and let them *fear*.

But he can't.

So he trembles and cowers instead.

“Who trained you?” the Blade demands.

“Warden,” Tubbo answers in a whisper. He should keep the name behind his teeth. But they already know. There’s really only one person it could be. He turns away, looks down at his hands again.

The Blade grunts. “What about Ender, does he know too?”

There is a deadly promise in his voice.

Tubbo whips around, fast as a snake and he hisses, just as dangerous, just as venomous, “I will fucking kill you if you touch him.”

The Angel sits up, leans back, his eyes wide.

The Blade isn’t surprised. “There you are,” he says, “there’s your teeth. “

Tubbo will fucking *show him teeth*.

“I will level this goddamn city,” he snarls, and he means ever last word, every last fucking letter. He locks eyes with the Blade. “I will leave you and yours to choke on your own fucking *blood*. If you touch Ender. If you even fucking think about *looking* at him no one will be able to set foot in this building for five hundred fucking years.”

He needs to shut up, he can’t *say* that sort of thing. They think its only an empty bluff, everyone knows that Tubbo doesn’t have any powers He relies on tricks and gadgets, like Warden.

Everyone knows he’s got no teeth of his own.

“Easy,” the Angel says, “we’re not--”

“He’s a kid too, isn’t he?” the Blade asks without asking. He isn’t seeking an answer, he’s seeking confirmation.

Tubbo pales.

“Fucking bastard,” the Blade snarls. “How many of you are there?”

Tubbo is silent.

“How many of those heroes are kids, Tubbo.”

Tubbo grits his teeth.

“Answer me,” the Blade commands, its almost soft, for some reason. “Just tell me how many.”

Tubbo shakes his head.

“Last chance,” the Blade says, “Or I go get Siren. How many kids is Warden training?”

His heart flutters behind his ribs. He doesn't want to see Siren. Doesn't want those terrible bonds around him again. Siren had been kind enough not to steal his voice when he was begging for Sam's life. He can't bear the thought of that soft, gentle croon forcing answers out of his mouth.

He can't risk Siren forcing secrets past his lips. The Blade might have let Sam live for making him a hero, but he wouldn't be so merciful if he knew what else Sam was making.

"Just us," he admits in a whisper, "its just the two of us."

The Blade hums. "Are there any others you know about? Being trained by anyone else?"

Tubbo bites his lip, "Purpled," he confesses in a whisper, "Punz was--After Punz he hasn't been around. I don't know where he is now."

"Thank you," the Blade says, "you did good. We're going to help you, alright? And Ender, and Purpled."

"Don't you fucking touch them," Tubbo snaps.

The Blade looks at him, calm and patient. "You're seventeen," he says, " the others can't be older. You shouldn't be fighting anyone, let alone people like us."

They're going to go after Ranboo, and he can teleport, but as Siren proved, its possible to stop him. To trap him. They could get him, like they got Tubbo. It could be Ranboo in another cell, with the Angel and the Blade looming over him.

Tubbo could kill them, but he would be killing everyone in this city, including Ranboo. There would be no hiding his powers then.

He would doom himself to the very thing he became a hero to avoid.

"We're not kids," Tubbo says, its defiance, but its also defeat. He's so tired. Of being scared, of being strong, of being a hero, of being a kid. He wishes he could go back, to before his powers manifested.

"Yes, you--" the Angel begins.

"No," the Blade interrupts him, "you aren't, not anymore. That was taken from you and you can't get it back. I'm sorry."

No one's ever said that to him before. He doesn't know how to feel about it. It makes something ugly and twisted and longing writhe in his chest.

"You can't hurt Warden," he says instead of dealing with that.

"Tubbo," the Angel says.

"I'll kill you if you do," Tubbo snarls.

“Mate,” the Angel says, “you can’t really--”

“You have no fucking idea what I’m capable of,” Tubbo snarls.

The Blade puts a hand on the Angel’s shoulder, “leave it, Phil. We’ll get there. We won’t go after Warden, for now. But you have to behave. Eat, don’t try to escape, don’t try to hurt anyone, alright?”

“Fine.” Tubbo’s breath shudders out of his lungs.

The Blade eyes him for a moment, but Tubbo remains steady. “You’re doing good kid.”

He turns and leaves without another word. The Angel stands to follow him, “I’ll bring you some food then I guess,” he says, “and maybe a book? Do you have a favorite genre?”

Tubbo shrugs. Books weren’t part of the deal.

“I’ll bring you a few different ones,” the Angel says, and then Tubbo is alone.

## Chapter End Notes

Tubbo, hiding secrets? its more likely than you think.  
(yes he has nuke powers, the secret is mostly the other thing)

# Chapter 4

## Chapter Summary

"I don't need help," Tubbo mutters.

"Yes, you do," The Blade says, but he doesn't sound angry with Tubbo for talking back.

"You're seventeen and you're getting thrown into life or death situations, I've seen your fights. You're good, I'll give you that, but this is risky work. No matter how good you are, there are no guarantees."

Tubbo grits his teeth. "I know that."

"You shouldn't be putting your life on the line when your life has barely begun."

"I can do whatever I want."

"But this isn't what you want," the Blade says softly, "this is a choice someone else made for you. And I know, I'm taking another choice from you by keeping you here."

"Then let me go."

"No."

## Chapter Notes

Some of you are thinking that its the government that has Tubbo being a hero. It is not, that's all Sam. The Dream Team are the first and only government sponsored superheroes.

We get Tommy and Tubbo interactions today, but like. Don't get your hopes up for clingy duo fam. Its just not gonna work out in the current situation

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It isn't the Angel who brings him books, its Tommy. He looks okay, he's not snarling and bristled the way he was when Schlatt had him. He's...He looks happy. Which is weird for a prisoner.

He dumps and armload of books in the cell with little fanfare or care for how much noise he might be making. "Phil said you wanted books," he says gruffly.

Tubbo doesn't want books, certainly not from the Angel, but he's a hero and Tommy is a civilian. "Thanks," he says, his voice quiet and raspy.

Tommy shuffles his feet, if it were anyone else Tubbo would think it was shy, awestruck to be meeting a hero. Tommy has never seemed particularly impressed with him.

“They’re nice,” Tommy says suddenly, “I mean--they aren’t mean. They won’t do anything to you. Tech--uh, the Blade’s a big fuckin softie.”

The Blade had nearly killed Sam in front of his eyes while Tubbo begged him not to.

Stockholm syndrome or something, its got to be.

“Right,” Tommy says when Tubbo still doesn’t answer. “I’m gonna go? Unless you want something?”

He knows their names, he thinks they’re nice, he trusts them, maybe even *likes* them. Its stupid, Tommy is a civilian, he’s a prisoner too, but Tubbo is suddenly angry at him. “You’re an idiot,” he mutters.

Tommy whips back around to him. “Fuck off dumbass,” he snaps. “You’re the one running around sticking your nose into shit!”

“You’re playing nice with supervillains!” Tubbo snarls back.

“You’re a fucking idiot!”

“Not as much of one as you!”

“I’ll fucking come over there and show you who’s an idiot!” Tommy says, taking a step forward. Maybe its supposed to be threatening. Tubbo is tired of being scared, tired of cowering and being helpless. He jumps to his feet, braced wide, hands clenched into fists.

“Try it! See what fucking happens! You’re just a dumb kid you can’t even fight!”

“I’ll kick your ass!”

“Do it then!”

Tommy lunges for him, but he barely gets a step before the door opens. They both freeze.

“Tommy,” Siren says, disapproving.

Tommy points accusingly to Tubbo, not at all afraid to have garnered the ire of Siren. “He fucking started it!”

Siren steps into the cell and Tubbo backs away, staring, wide-eyed, waiting. What is he going to do? They were loud, they were technically disobeying the Blade. He said not to hurt anyone. Oh god. Were they going to go after Sam?

His hands shake.

Siren tucks Tommy under his arm and rubs his knuckles over his hair. Tommy grumbles, batting at his hand. “Sorry,” Siren says, “the gremlin is a bit feral.”

Tubbo stares at Siren. At Tommy, utterly comfortable under his arm. He's annoyed, scowling at Siren and trying to shove him off but he's not scared. He's not even wary. Like the thought of one of the most dangerous villains in the city hurting him hadn't even occurred to him.

Tommy isn't a prisoner.

He's one of them.

Siren might say something to him, might wait for an answer, but Tubbo just stares at the ground and waits for them to leave. Eventually they do.

He's alone. With a stack of books from the Angel of Death and hollow assurances from all of the villains that he won't be harmed.

He wants to go home.

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He fully intends to ignore the books, he wants nothing from these people. But the cell is blank and empty and time slips by so slowly and his anxieties threaten to swallow him whole if he is unoccupied. So he pokes at the pile and eventually picks up one and starts reading.

It's some history book, about the revolution that had established the current government. It's dry and Tubbo can see the propaganda woven into the narrative.

So could someone else, apparently, because the margins are filled with neat, cramped writing. Scathing comments, jokes that honestly make Tubbo snort to himself, even corrections sometimes, notes about where to find more information.

He hardly notices the time passing, focusing himself on memorizing the notes. He's never been much of one for history, but it is something to do, some hope to cling to. When he gets out of here, he's going to look up the books recommended in the margins. He's going to get out. And Sam will help him look for the books.

If he has time. If he's in a good mood. If he's not working on the project in the back room. The encrypted files on his computer. The things that he hides when Tubbo or Ranboo come into the room.

He hasn't had a lot of time lately. He hasn't been in a good mood in a long time either. Not since he started the secret project.

Tubbo jumps when the door opens. The Blade is standing there, carrying a tray of food. It smells delicious, but it turns Tubbo's stomach. Sam was a terrible cook, and Tubbo and Ranboo were even worse. They ate a lot of protein bars and cheap take out.

"Dinner," the Blade informs him, stepping into the cell.

Tubbo closes the book and wraps his arms around his stomach. "I'm not hungry," he mutters.



The Blade is silent for a moment, watching him. He hunches in on himself. "Eating was part of the deal," the Blade says eventually. "No hunger strikes. C'mon." He steps forward and sets the tray on the bed beside Tubbo. "Eat."

Tubbo stiffens, hating the feeling of the Blade's eyes digging into him. He grits his teeth.

Eating was part of the deal, the deal that is keeping Sam safe. He picks up the fork.

The Blade grunts approvingly and leaves.

Tubbo is hungry, and the food is good, he eats, mechanically, bite by bite until there is nothing left on the plate. Then he goes back to his book.

The Blade comes back when he's a chapter in. He looks at the empty plate and grunts his approval again. He approaches to take the dishes and Tubbo can't help but tense, curling away from him.

The Blade sighs and looks at him for another one of those silent moments. Then he sits on the bed. "Look," he says quietly, "I know you don't see it right now, but this isn't something we're doing to hurt you, or use you, or anything like that." He folds down, elbows resting on his knees, "we're trying to help you."

"I don't need help," Tubbo mutters.

"Yes, you do," The Blade says, but he doesn't sound angry with Tubbo for talking back. "You're seventeen and you're getting thrown into life or death situations, I've seen your fights. You're good, I'll give you that, but this is risky work. No matter how good you are, there are no guarantees."

Tubbo grits his teeth. "I know that."

"You shouldn't be putting your life on the line when your life has barely begun."

"I can do whatever I want."

"But this isn't what you want," the Blade says softly, "this is a choice someone else made for you. And I know, I'm taking another choice from you by keeping you here."

"Then let me go."

"No."

Tubbo flinches, even though the word isn't said with an ounce of anger. There is no danger, only calm patience. A steady sureness. The Blade is not someone who can be swayed from his course, no matter what it is.

"This isn't a choice you get to make, even if I let you go, you'll go back to Warden. You'll go back to doing dangerous shit. I'm not letting you die for someone else's goals, Tubbo."

"It's not your business."

“I’m making it my business.”

“I’m fine.”

“You’re really not,” the Blade says softly. “I’m sorry.”

“You’re really not,” Tubbo mutters.

The Blade takes the empty dishes without another word.

Tubbo tries to go back to his book, but he doesn’t get much reading done. A few hours after dinner, there is a knock at the door. The Angel doesn’t wait for a response before he pokes his head in.

“Hey mate,” he says gently, keeping his distance and staying by the door. “Its getting late, we’re probably gonna go to bed soon. Siren will be keeping an eye on you so if you need anything just yell for him. I brought you some clothes if you wanted to change into something else to sleep. They’re Tommy’s so they’re probably a bit long for you, but they’ll be more comfortable than what you’re in.”

The remains of his suit, stripped of the weapons and armor that Sam built into it.

Tubbo twists his fingers into the sleeve as though the Angel is going to try and rip it off of him.

“Only if you want,” he says, setting the pile by the door.

Tubbo remains silent, hand fisted in the fabric of his suit, staring at the ground.

“Alright,” the Angel says softly, “I’ll leave you be then.”

The door slides shut. In another couple of hours, Siren knocks on the door and calls through. “Hey Tubbo, its getting late, you want me to turn the lights off?”

Tubbo looks at the book. He hasn’t been processing anything he’s read for the past hour. “Yes,” he says softly, setting the book on the ground.

“Okay,” Siren replies, “lights going out.”

The cell goes dark.

Tubbo lays on the bed and stares into the near-blackness. Its weird, without the background noise of Sam’s machines, the faint clatter of Sam working on things, without Ranboo shifting and mumbling beside him. Tubbo curls into a ball and tries to make his memories feel real enough that he can sleep.

Something whispers in the dark. Tubbo’s eyes pop open and he stares into the bright red eyes of one of the Blade’s shadows. He freezes, breath going shallow, body tense. As if he could hide.

The shadow tilts its head, whispering low and soft. It sounds almost...gentle. It comes nearer.

Even in the low light, Tubbo can see that its different, from the Blade's other shadows. Its more...wispy, its eyes are a pale orange rather than the usual crimson. Its voice is softer.

It sits in the dark and watches him.

"What do you want?" Tubbo whispers, "leave me alone."

The shadow tilts its head and takes a step closer instead. Its nose is immaterial, but he can still feel it when it brushes the skin of his cheek. Tubbo jerks away with a gasp, raising his hand to the place it had touched. There is something warm and wet and for a heart-stopping moment he thinks its blood.

But his cheek doesn't hurt. Its only his eyes that are stinging.

Tears. Its just tears.

Tubbo wipes them away roughly. The shadow looks...weirdly sad, almost. It whispers something to him, but of course he can't understand. It rests its head on the edge of the bed, watching him with dim orange eyes.

"Well if you don't want me to be sad let me go," Tubbo hisses. The shadow doesn't move. Reluctantly, he lays back down. The shadow carefully grabs the blanket between its teeth and pulls it up over his shoulders. "Fuck off," Tubbo mutters to it.

It just keeps watching him.

It should keep him awake, but he finds himself slipping off to sleep anyway.

## Chapter End Notes

For those of you who read Techno's backstory, yes that was Carl (my beloved) Carl is just as upset as Techno about another child soldier existing, but he's a bit less...murder-y about it. Carl remembers comforting the other kids in the barracks when they were alone and scared and so he's taken up that old job again with Tubbo. I love Carl so fucking much

# Chapter 5

## Chapter Summary

“One of my shadows will be with you,” the Blade says, “no matter where you go or what you do.”

“Where I go?” Tubbo asks, ignoring the thrill of fear that comes from the words. The shadows have never hurt him, and Carl has been watching over him while he sleeps, but this is different.

The Blade’s mouth tightens, unhappy. Tubbo shrinks away. “Ender’s been out patrolling,” the Blade says, “alone.”

“No.”

“Tubbo--”

“Don’t you fucking touch him,” Tubbo snarls, “I won’t let you.”

## Chapter Notes

Ranboo Content fam, you're welcome

He gets three meals a day, they ask when he wants the lights on and off, the Angel keeps bringing him things to keep himself entertained and asking if he needs or wants anything else.

“Let me go,” Tubbo answers every time.

“I’m sorry,” the Angel says, and he almost seems it, “we can’t.”

He brings Tubbo more books.

Every day he also gets a visit from the Blade. He sits on the bed beside Tubbo and speaks in a low voice, he’s never angry, no matter what Tubbo says to him. It is both better and worse than the Angel’s gentleness.

The Angel makes Tubbo feel fragile, the Blade makes him feel...he doesn’t even know. There is something in the endless patience, almost like Sam’s but there is no snap waiting if Tubbo pushes too far. No reminder that he isn’t a child, he can’t be acting childish.

He is left waiting for the end of the Blade’s patience but it just doesn’t come. There is only a soft understanding, a sort of sadness in the way the shadows whisper to him.

Sometimes he just talks, but usually he asks questions. Things Tubbo can't ever answer. How Ender's teleportation works, what the limits of it are, where he last saw Purpled, what his powers are and their limitations.

Tubbo says nothing, and the Blade allows it. He doesn't even threaten to get Siren. He just accepts Tubbo's silence.

Every night the shadow comes and lays with him. Tubbo should be afraid of it, but it seems so...feeble, almost. It wavers and warps unlike any of the other shadow's he's seen. Its whispers are softer, almost raspier.

Tubbo wonders if shadows get old.

For five days, this is the routine. Tubbo wakes on the sixth day and instead of springing out of bed at the crack of dawn like he would with Sam, he lays in bed. The cell is still dark, they usually don't turn on the lights until he asks. The shadow is still sitting with him, watching him with pale orange eyes.

Tubbo stares back at it silently, watching the way the darkness that forms its body shifts.

Then the cell door opens. Tubbo jolts up, twisting to face the door. For a split second he is afraid it's Sam, come to scold him for laziness. He's had so much less patience recently. They don't have time for Tubbo to just lay around, he has to get up, he has to train, patrol, a dozen other things.

But of course it isn't Sam.

Sam might be--

It's the Blade, it's not Sam. He is carrying something in his hands, but he's also looking at the Shadow. "So this is where you've been going huh?"

The shadow gets up, stretching in a way that no material being could manage and hops off of the bed to trot to its master. He kneels down and gently strokes its head, lets it press its nose to his cheek. Then it slips into his shadow, disappearing without even its eyes showing.

"That's Carl," the Blade says, "He doesn't come out much, but he likes you."

"Oh," Tubbo says.

He doesn't know why the Blade is here, but he can see what is in his hands now. A bracelet, thick and metallic.

A cuff.

The Blade sees his eyes on it and he sighs. "You're going to put this on," he says, like he's prepared for a fight.

"What is it?"

“A tracker, of sorts,” the Blade says, Tubbo’s half surprised he gets an answer. “I don’t trust you with any tech, and I wasn’t going to bank on no one else being able to hijack a signal, this is the compromise.” He holds out the cuff and Tubbo can see how thick it is, but the Blade isn’t holding it like its heavy.

“One of my shadows will be with you,” the Blade says, “no matter where you go or what you do.”

“Where I go?” Tubbo asks, ignoring the thrill of fear that comes from the words. The shadows have never hurt him, and Carl has been watching over him while he sleeps, but this is different.

The Blade’s mouth tightens, unhappy. Tubbo shrinks away. “Ender’s been out patrolling,” the Blade says, “alone.”

“No.”

“Tubbo--”

“Don’t you fucking touch him,” Tubbo snarls, “I won’t let you.”

He lunges, he doesn’t care about the deal, he doesn’t care what the Blade may do to him for attacking. Ranboo is in danger and Tubbo isn’t going to sit here passively.

He yearns to unleash his power in a way he hasn’t since he was young and stupid. He could end this, he could end it all.

But Tubbo is the worst kind of glass cannon, so he can do nothing but throw a punch at the Blade’s jaw. His hand is easily caught, and the Blade tugs him off balance just as easily. He’s so much stronger than Tubbo, no amount of training will make up for that.

Tubbo snarls wordlessly and kicks at him, he should have gotten to his feet when he had the chance, should have gotten out of the corner before he attacked.

All the Blade has to do to put an end to his rebellion is press him back into it. He’s pinned, he has no space to move, no chance of overpowering the Blade.

Fuck.

He’s such a goddamn idiot.

But the Blade doesn’t even look angry, just blank, with maybe a little bit of sadness lingering in his eyes. Carl is back, watching with his pale eyes. He whispers something soft.

“I know,” the Blade says, “it has to be done, I’m sorry.” Tubbo isn’t sure which of them he’s talking to because he’s looking at Tubbo and his face has softened just a little bit.

Tubbo tries to pull his hand to his chest but the Blade doesn’t let him. He pulls Tubbo’s arm out straight and fixes the cuff around his wrist despite Tubbo’s best efforts.

When its done, he lets Tubbo go, pulling away with his hands raised in surrender.

Tubbo jerks on the cuff, trying to pull it off, his fingers scrabble for some catch or latch. Something to get it *off*.

“Stop,” the Blade says, “you’re going to hurt yourself.”

“Fuck off,” Tubbo snaps. He slams the cuff into the wall.

The Blade grabs his wrist again, “Tubbo, breathe.”

“I’ll do what I want,” Tubbo snarls. He didn’t even notice how fast his breath was coming.

“You want to pass out?”

“I want to go home!”

“I can’t let you do that,” the Blade says softly, “its not safe.”

“I’m *fine*, I can take care of myself!”

The Blade doesn’t bother answering. Its obvious enough to both of them that Tubbo *can*’t.

Otherwise he wouldn’t be here.

Tubbo swallows and pulls his cuffed arm to his chest, curling his knees up as if he could hide it.

“I’m sorry,” the Blade says, “I don’t want to make you scared, but we have to get Ender. He’s on his own, its dangerous.”

“Leave him *alone*,” Tubbo growls.

“I can’t do that either,” the Blade says, then, he calls to the door, “Siren. Its time.”

No, *fuck*. Fucking no. Tubbo slaps his hands over his ears, curls tighter so they’ll have to pry him up like getting a snail out of its shell. “Fuck off!” he screams. Noise, anything, anything to keep him from hearing Siren’s voice. To keep those invisible chains from wrapping around him.

Hands on his arms, trying to pry his hands away. He digs his nails into his own skin. He’ll rip off his own fucking ears before he lets them use him against Ranboo.

The Blade pries his fingers away, pulls his hand off his ear. Covers his mouth. “Hush,” Siren croons, and Tubbo’s scream dies out. He begs with tearful eyes for that to be the end of it. Siren looks sorry, but he doesn’t stop. “Come with us,” he commands, “don’t try to run, don’t try to warn Ender.”

And Tubbo has no choice but to obey.

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They blindfold him and the Blade carries him outside, into a car, back out onto the street, to the top of a building. Tubbo can feel the wind, hear the distant noise of the cars. He wants to fight but he *can't*. He can't even beg, can't try to bargain on Ranboo's behalf.

"Kneel," Siren commands gently, and then the blindfold is pulled away. They're on a roof in the eastern side of the city. This is Tubbo's route, this is where he patrols.

Ranboo has been keeping his territory safe for him. He snuffles, sobbing silently because Siren hasn't given him permission to be loud.

A gentle hand runs over his hair. The Blade. "It'll be alright kid," he says softly. Then he puts on the skull mask, "let's get this over with."

The Angel takes off, and Siren slips into the shadows. There is only Tubbo and the Blade standing in the middle of the roof. Bait.

Obvious bait, but Ranboo will fall for it all the same. Ranboo will come for him. Ranboo will always come for him, and Tubbo would do the same. They are more than brothers in arms, more than best friends. They are two halves of a whole, they cannot bear to be separate.

And that will be their downfall.

They don't have to wait for long. The Blade's com crackles and he stands up straighter, rests a hand on Tubbo's shoulder. And then Ranboo appears. Tubbo can hear the familiar *whoosh-pop* of his teleportation behind them and the Blade turns. "Ender."

"Let him go."

The Blade's grip tightens on Tubbo's shoulder. He turns Tubbo to face Ranboo. He looks terrible. His mask covers his whole face, but Tubbo *knows* Ranboo, as well as he knows himself. He can see the fear, the exhaustion, the stress, weighing on his shoulders. He's tired, he's making bad decisions. He came *here* alone. With no back up.

He's not holding himself right for there to be an ambush. Tubbo knows all his tells, he knows what Ranboo looks like when he's faking desperation, exhaustion.

He isn't faking.

He takes a half step closer, hands tightening into fists, fingers flexing with the desire to reach for Tubbo.

"You know the deal," The Blade motions to his ears. Telling Ranboo to pull out his earplugs.

*No!*

The words get caught in Tubbo's throat, Siren's order a stranglehold. He can't warn him, can't beg him to run, can't even shake his head. All he can do is sit, obedient, while Ranboo dooms himself.



Ranboo's head tilts down, his eyes meet Tubbo's. Tubbo tries desperately to flick his eyes to where Siren is hiding. Tries to convey that Ranboo needs to fucking *run*.

Ranboo reaches up to his ear.

Tubbo's breath hitches, caught on another warning.

"Don't teleport," Siren croons, "don't run."

Tubbo stares into Ranboo's eyes as the realization sets in. The fear, the despair. He swallows. "You have me, now let him go."

The Blade's hand tightens around Tubbo's shoulder. "No."

Ranboo grits his teeth, Tubbo knows the shift in his mask. "You promised."

"I lied," the Blade says, "supervillain, kid."

"I'm not--"

The Blade doesn't have to say anything. Tubbo tries to apologize with his eyes. There is an apology in Ranboo's too.

"Put this on," the Blade says, holding out another one of the cuffs. "You're coming with us."

Tubbo shuts his eyes and slumps. This is it, then. They're both in the same boat.

At least they're in it together.

# Chapter 6

## Chapter Notes

Well guys, this is it, the end of all the stuff I have written for Dumpster verse. Its been a hell of a ride, and I've loved it, this was my biggest AU so far. Note that this is only the end of the stuff \*I've\* written for Dumpster. Maddie is working on stuff as we speak, but it'll probably be a bit before it goes up, keep you eye on the series though, she's going cool places with it.

You can really tell with this chapter where I started to get burnt out lol, this ending is really rushed and I'm still not 100% happy with it, but its better to have it done kind of rushed instead of remaining incomplete forever so take what you can get I guess.

This is also gonna be the last thing I post for a little bit, I'm not feeling great and I've not been working much on stuff so I'm behind. I have a few one-shots that I could post, but I'm gonna wait until I've got the next big AU ready to go before I do that. Not sure how long the drought will last, a few days at least, maybe up to a week if I decide to just chill for a bit. We'll see. Anyway, enjoy the chapter and thank you to everyone for reading and enjoying Dumpster Verse! <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Ranboo is a fool, he's an idiot, he's tired and he's stupid and most of all he's trapped. Caught in the web of Siren's words and the Blade's hollow promises, a foolish fly.

*"Won't you step into my parlour? Said the spider to the fly"* and like an idiot he'd walked right in so desperate, so stupid that he forgot who he was dealing with. He'd been confident that he could teleport Tubbo out before the Blade turned the tables on him.

But then he'd seen him, his best friend, his everything, on his knees in front of the Blade himself and every plan had gone out the window. He would do anything for Tubbo, and that was what doomed them both.

They're side by side now, in the backseat of a car being driven by the Angel of Death. Siren is sitting shotgun, the Blade is in the back with them. Ranboo and Tubbo are both blindfolded but Ranboo can feel the weight of his gaze on them.

He scoots a little closer to Tubbo. Tubbo threads their fingers together, and Ranboo squeezes. They're both clinging to each other, like that will keep them from ever being separated again.

They drive, and they wait. Finally, they stop and the Blade nudges them out of the car. They are led up stairs and into a building. Ranboo shudders, wondering if they will ever make it back out.

Then the Blade tries to pull Tubbo's hand out of his. "No," Ranboo says, clinging tighter, "don't, you can't."

"Fuck off!" Tubbo snarls, "leave him alone! Don't touch him!"

"I'm sorry," the Blade says, "but I'm not leaving you two together to plan things."

"No!" Ranboo says again, tugging Tubbo closer to wrap his arms around him.

The Blade sighs, "Siren."

"Techno," Siren says hesitantly.

"Don't you fucking dare!" Tubbo snarls, "I'll kill you. I'll kill all of you."

"Come quietly," Siren croons gently, and Tubbo's arms fall away from around him.

"No," Ranboo says again, its more of a sob, this time.

"I'm sorry," Siren says, "I-- it'll be alright."

He murmurs for Tubbo to come with him, and Ranboo is left alone with the Angel and the Blade.

The Blade sighs, "lets get that blindfold off, alright?"

Ranboo is silent, but he doesn't fight when the Blade steps up behind him. He blinks at the brightness of the room, the Angel is standing in front of him, his arms crossed, his face conflicted. He offers a small smile, "hey mate, you don't need to be scared, I promise."

Ranboo looks away.

"We didn't hurt him," the Blade says, "we've had him for what, a week? And he's fine, we're not doing this to hurt either of you."

Ranboo swallows but doesn't speak.

The Blade sighs, "alright. We'll figure it out, for now, take off your gear."

Ranboo's breath hitches, Siren isn't here to enforce the order, but he obeys anyway. With shaking hands, he unclips his belt, he already came without communicators or trackers, as per the deal, but he has weapons and potions. He sets them on the table before him.

"Everything," the Blade commands softly.

Ranboo looks up at him, startled into nearly meeting his eyes. He looks back down just as quickly.

Fuck.

*Fuck.*

Slowly, he unfastens the buckles of his gauntlets. He swallows, hand hovering over his own wrist. The Blade doesn't make a sound, doesn't even shift his weight impatiently.

It helps, sort of.

Ranboo pulls the cloth away from his skin. Revealing it for what it is. Pitch black and inhuman, his fingers tipped in claws. He grits his teeth and hunches his shoulders and waits, letting the glove fall.

"And the other one," the Blade says, like he didn't notice, like he doesn't care that Ranboo is so blatantly mutated. Like he doesn't care that Ranboo isn't human anymore.

He was when he was young, but when his powers manifested...

He became this, a monster, and not even a beautiful one. Not to anyone but Tubbo.

Hesitantly, Ranboo takes off his other glove. The Blade grunts approving.

"The mask," he says softly.

"Please," Ranboo whispers.

"Its alright mate," the Angel says, shifting like he's going to take a step closer, but he seems to think better of it. "We don't care about," he makes a motion to his face. "You're a kid. You're just a kid."

Ranboo swallows thickly, trying to hold back the tears. They will only hurt him more.

How many people, his parents, strangers, friends, all of them cared. Cared that he was strange and inhuman and *wrong*. But not them, not these villains who nearly killed Sam and have kept Tubbo prisoner. Not these villains who are keeping him prisoner.

Slowly, Ranboo reaches up and pulls off the mask.

The Angel smiles gently at him, "there you are," he says softly, "see? Everything is fine."

It isn't, it really, *really*, isn't, but its a nice lie.

Ranboo sets the mask on the table, the blank eyes stare at him. He doesn't know how to read their expression. He looks to the Blade.

"You're alright kid," he grunts. "Come on, we'll get you settled in."

\*\*\*

They let Tubbo visit him.

"No funny business," the Blade warns him, "or this'll be the last time."

Tubbo doesn't reply.

Ranboo is curled up on the bed, his lanky limbs folded up around him. He looks so small.

“Boo,” Tubbo says, his voice small and thick and full of too many things to be heard by the enemies around them. He holds out his hand and Ranboo lunges to take it, to pull him closer. They fold around each other, and Tubbo touches the irritated lines down Ranboo’s cheeks. He’s been crying.

They made him cry. Tubbo looks over his shoulder, at Siren and the Blade and the Angel, all gathered in the doorway watching them. They made Ranboo cry.

“Let us go,” Tubbo says, and it isn’t desperate, it isn’t furious, it is simply a command.

“You know I ca--”

“Let us go,” Tubbo says quietly, “Or I will kill every last one of you where you stand.”

“Tubbo,” the Blade says, “you--”

“I can,” Tubbo says, and Ranboo gasps, clutches at his sleeves, whispers for him to stop. Tubbo doesn’t. “I could kill you, I could kill this city.” He turns, keeping a hand on Ranboo’s shoulder to hush him. “Sam made me a hero, and he said it was to protect me. So that the Government couldn’t take me away, too many people watching.”

He’d believed it for a long time. With so many eyes watching, it would be impossible to make him disappear. But then Sam started working on the secret project and he wondered if that was all there was to it. Just a hero finding a way to save a kid.

Sam has always cared more for the greater good.

His breath shudders in his lungs. All of Sam’s secrets gather on his tongue, but he hides them away. He knows what Sam’s project is, he saw the plans, encrypted and hidden in his harddrive. He knows what Sam is building.

He swore he would never work for the government again. He knew what happened in the Vault and yet he is building something worse.

The Labyrinth will be even more inescapable, Sam does good work, perfect work.

He swore that he would protect them, but he has already broken on promise. Tubbo knows its only a matter of time before he and Ranboo are put in the Labyrinth. Only a matter of time until its finished.

“San said it was to protect me, but it was also to protect the city,” Tubbo says, “from me. I’m done. I’m done with it all. I’m done with heroes and villains. I’m done with mercy. If you don’t let us go, I’ll kill you all. The fallout will linger for a thousand years and no one will be able to set foot in this city for generations. Let us go.”

The Blade meets his eyes. They are silent for a long moment, they both know what it means to be willing to do anything for someone else.

“Alright,” he says quietly.

\*\*\*

They’re out, they’re free.

“Come on,” Ranboo says, tugging Tubbo’s wrist, “We’ve got to get back to Sam.”

Tubbo--Tubbo stops, pulling his wrist away. Ranboo keeps going a few steps, but then realizes he’s alone and stops as well. “Tubbo?”

“I don’t--” Tubbo bites his lip. “What if we...didn’t?”

“Didn’t what?”

“Go back to Sam.”

Ranboo looks at him, shocked, “but--”

Tubbo wraps his arms around himself, “I just--the Blade was *right*, Boo. We’re *kids*. And he’s throwing us into the front lines.”

“To *protect us*,” Ranboo says, “to protect *you!*”

“Well I don’t want to be protected!” Tubbo shouts, “I don’t *need* to be protected! I could destroy this entire fucking city if I wanted to!”

“But the government--”

“Do you really think throwing me into the public eye is protecting me from them?” Tubbo demands, “they’re keeping an eye on me. On both of us. They’re just waiting until they have a way to contain us.”

“Sam wouldn’t let--”

“I looked,” Tubbo says, turning to the city. Its laid out in all its glory before them, buildings and people, glass and metal and stone, all of them so very fragile before him. He has shed blood, sweat, and tears to protect them, thinking he was protecting himself.

But he knows now. He knows the truth of it.

“I saw what he was working on,” Tubbo whispers. “I know what his project is, the secret one.”

Ranboo swallows.

“I looked too,” he whispers. “While I was alone at the apartment. Its--”

“I know.” Tubbo says, “I know Boo. He swore he’d never build it but he *is*. If he can break that promise, what other promises will he break?”

“He--” Ranboo sighs. “I don’t know.” He shuffles to stand beside Tubbo, shoulder to shoulder, or as close as they get with their height difference. “What do you think we should do?”

“Leave,” Tubbo says. “We just leave. This isn’t our fight, it never was. I’m done playing the game, I want--I want to be a kid. I want peace, I want to wake up and not have to train, I want to walk around and not have to keep an eye out for danger. I want to live, and I want to do it with you.” Hesitantly, he threads his fingers through Ranboo’s, looking away from the city and up to his face. “It’s the only way I want to live.”

Ranboo looks out over the city for a long, quiet moment. He swallows, and Tubbo can see tears glittering in his eyes in the light of the sunset. Finally, he turns away from the place that they sacrificed so much for and he looks to Tubbo. “That’s the only way I want to live too.”

Tubbo smiles, and Ranboo smiles back, and they laugh, and they cry, and they try to figure out how they’re going to live.

“Together,” Ranboo whispers.

“Together,” Tubbo agrees.

They leave it all behind, the Blade, the Angel, the city. Even Sam. It hurts, deep in his chest to do it, to let him think that they’re dead or just vanished forever, but they do it all the same.

They leave behind the man that saved them, the man that trained them, the man that killed their childhoods and the man that loved them. They leave him with memories and regrets, and broken promises.

They leave him with the plans for a prison, even more inescapable than the Vault. They leave Daedalus to build his Labyrinth, knowing that he will be trapped in it, but they will not play minotaur.

They live, together, and that is all they ever wanted.

## Chapter End Notes

Like I said, rushed ending, but it’s finished. Thank you for reading and enjoying, I’ll see you guys when the drought is over.

## End Notes

### STOP

Before you write a comment about how Character Is Doing Bad, I am aware. I wrote them doing A Bad on purpose. That is the point of Dumpster Verse. There is no moral paragon here. Nobody is entirely a good or bad guy. They are all going to do bad shit, they will all do good shit. I am tired of comments just talking about how the characters did Bad Thing, if that's all you've got to say, you're reading the wrong story. This is a universe about moral complexity.

I have asked people to refrain from leaving the angry "Character did bad >:(" comments but clearly that isn't working so this will have moderated comments. I don't like conflict and shit but I do get tired of this stuff eventually you guys.

With that out of the way, thank you for reading and thank you to everyone who's been enjoying this universe, I really loved writing it. I appreciate all of you for reading and leaving kudos and such.

You can find me on tumblr at [technobladesbasement](#)

If you're inspired to create anything based on my fics, art, writing, interperative dance you have full permission to do it. Inspiring other people to do stuff is my favorite thing.

If you saw typos no you didn't <3

I love comments but I am shit at replying to them, sometimes Maddie or Zambo will reply for me because they are blessed, wonderful people who know I have so much anxiety. So much. but I love all comments regardless and I thank everyone who leaves me one, they brighten my day

Works inspired by this one

[D is for Dangerous](#) by [bussybopper9000](#)

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!